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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON SOMALIA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In my previous report to the Security Council (S/1994/839), I informed the Council that I had asked my Special Representative to prepare an in-depth assessment of the prospects for national reconciliation in Somalia. I also said that I had decided to undertake a comprehensive review of the current troop strength of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) and would dispatch a special mission to discuss with the Special Representative and the Force Commander the extent of a reduction in the level of troops currently assigned to UNOSOM II, and to present specific recommendations to me.

2. The purpose of the present report is to apprise the Security Council of the outcome of these initiatives and to present to it recommendations on action to be taken during the period preceding the expiry of UNOSOM II's current mandate on 30 September 1994. Section II of the report contains an assessment of the prospects for national reconciliation. Section III discusses the feasibility of commencing a reduction in the level of troops while paying special attention to the views of the humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in Somalia and the essential tasks of ensuring the security of UNOSOM II personnel and humanitarian assistance programmes and personnel. The last section contains my observations and recommendations.

II. PROSPECTS FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

3. A durable political settlement remains the indispensable prerequisite for restoring peace and security, re-establishing central governmental structures and services, and commencing the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction of the economic and social infrastructures of Somalia. I have repeatedly expressed concern that the national reconciliation process is advancing at too slow a pace and that progress achieved in the rebuilding of institutions, especially the police and the judicial system, cannot be consolidated until the many factions in Somalia, and especially their leaders, decide to work seriously together to reach a durable political settlement. In my previous report, I reiterated my call upon the Somali political leaders to redouble their efforts to reach agreement on the basis of pluralism and mutual tolerance so that the

international community could regain confidence that it would be able to complete its mission in Somalia by March 1995.

4. The Security Council is aware that since the beginning of 1993 two major conferences have been held with the assistance and support of the United Nations in an effort to advance the peace process and to facilitate national reconciliation and unity. In the Addis Ababa Agreement of 27 March 1993, the 15 Somali factions agreed on a cease-fire and disarmament and on transitional arrangements leading to the establishment of a Transitional National Council. While some progress has been registered at the local and regional levels in the implementation of this Agreement, repeated violations of the cease-fire and lack of progress in disarmament, as well as factional disputes, inter-clan rivalries and conflicts have made it impossible to proceed with the establishment of a central administrative mechanism.

5. In an attempt to reactivate the process, the 15 signatories to the Addis Ababa Agreement adopted on 24 March 1994 the Nairobi Declaration in which they agreed, among other things, on the convening of a national reconciliation conference, to be preceded by a preparatory meeting, with a view to establishing an interim government. Ongoing factional disputes and conflicts and disagreements concerning modalities have made it impossible thus far to reach agreement on the date and venue for the preparatory meeting, which was originally scheduled for 15 April 1994. Consequently, the national reconciliation conference that was scheduled to take place on 15 May 1994 has been indefinitely postponed.

6. In addition to these efforts at the national level, inter-clan reconciliation meetings at the local, district and regional levels have also been sponsored by the United Nations to move forward the peace process. These include the Galkayo meeting (June 1993), the Jubaland peace conference (June-August 1993), the Lower Juba region Reconciliation Conference (Kismayo, June 1994) and the Absame Reconciliation Conference (Dobley, June-July 1994), as well as several other local and regional initiatives and conferences, including those by the Imam of Hirab with respect to the situation in Mogadishu. Taken together, these meetings have enhanced the prospects for national reconciliation.

7. It is now generally acknowledged that conflicts within the dominant Hawiye clan, to which both Mr. Ali Mahdi and General Mohammed Farah Aidid belong, constitute the major obstacle to national reconciliation. It is equally recognized that no meaningful progress can be made in the political process without first finding a solution to the conflict in Mogadishu, and in particular the conflict among the Hawiye sub-clans (Habr Gedir, Abgal, Hawadle and Murosade). The root causes of dissension and tension among the 15 factions are also by and large attributable to rivalries within the Hawiye clan. The recent hostilities in Merka, Mogadishu, Belet Weyne, Jalalaxi and the Lower Juba region are manifestations of this fact. If Hawiye reconciliation could be attained and the differences resolved between Mr. Ali Mahdi and General Aidid, the prospects for national reconciliation and the establishment of a national government would be significantly improved. Both General Aidid and Mr. Ali Mahdi have expressed their willingness to participate in a Hawiye reconciliation conference with the cooperation of other concerned factions and political leaders.

8. It is the view of my Special Representative that with the cooperation of the parties concerned and the support of the international community, the reconciliation of the Hawiye should be achieved in good time to create a favourable climate for the convening of a conference on national reconciliation and the establishment of an interim government in the last quarter of 1994. This would leave three months for consolidating agreed transitional arrangements for the interim government before the completion of the mission of UNOSOM II at the end of March 1995. While the international community obviously supports the attainment of this objective, it is for the Somali people as a whole to make every effort to achieve a comprehensive cessation of hostilities and to establish and consolidate an interim government before UNOSOM II completes its mission.

9. I am inclined to agree with the assessment of my Special Representative that the successful conclusion of the Hawiye conference would greatly facilitate the political reconciliation process. It was the intra-Hawiye feud that started the crisis in Mogadishu and its environs in 1991 and has been the main cause of the resumption of fighting since June 1994.

10. There are, however, no clear signs that preparations for a Hawiye conference are under way. In addition, it has been learnt that it takes a long time in Somalia to convene such meetings and bring them to a successful conclusion. In this instance, in particular, the convening of a successful conference by the end of September 1994 would necessitate major changes of approach from the principal actors. I have nevertheless instructed my Special Representative to provide all possible support to the efforts deployed by the parties concerned to convene a Hawiye conference in the next few weeks.

III. POSSIBLE REDUCTION IN THE UNOSOM II FORCE

11. The Special Mission which I dispatched to Somalia to discuss with my Special Representative and the Force Commander the feasibility of a reduction in the Force's level arrived in Mogadishu on 28 July 1994 and remained in Somalia until 4 August 1994. It was headed by Major-General Timothy Dibuama and included Ms. Elisabeth Lindenmayer, Principal Officer, Department of Peace-Keeping Operations and Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Senior Political Affairs Officer, Department of Political Affairs. The Mission had lengthy and detailed discussions with my Special Representative, Mr. James V. Gbeho; the Force Commander, General Abooh Samah Bin Abu Bakar; and other senior civilian and military officials of UNOSOM II. The Special Mission also received extensive briefings by the Indian Brigade at Baidoa and Kismayo. At Mogadishu and Kismayo, the Mission met with representatives of United Nations agencies, humanitarian organizations and NGOs.

12. In the Special Mission's discussions with my Special Representative and the Force Commander, a consensus was reached to reduce the UNOSOM II Force to about 17,200 all ranks by the end of September 1994. The Force's current authorized strength is 22,000 all ranks and the actual strength on 2 August 1994 was 18,761. The proposed reduction thus represents some 8 per cent of the actual strength but would bring the Force to a level 21.8 per cent below its authorized strength. The Force would continue to perform the tasks assigned to it under

its current mandate as provided for in Security Council resolution 897 (1994). These tasks include protection of major seaports and airports, providing security for humanitarian assistance operations, for UNOSOM II and support personnel and for installations and equipment of the United Nations and its agencies, as well as assisting in the re-establishment of the Somali police and judicial system.

13. The discussions at Mogadishu between the Special Mission and UNOSOM II also focused on the vital need to sustain, to the extent possible, the progress achieved in promoting stability in the regions. In many areas, appreciable progress has been made in negotiating regional agreements, training police units and initiating judicial arrangements, particularly in the regions referred to in paragraph 6 above. The support provided by the presence of military personnel of UNOSOM II has been a central factor in this regard, and the Special Mission concluded that any reduction should be at a pace that does not lead to a deterioration in security conditions.

14. In discussions with the Special Mission, representatives of humanitarian organizations expressed concern about the possible precipitous withdrawal of UNOSOM II troops from key regions in which they were currently operating. In order to be able to continue their activities, the humanitarian organizations consider it essential that the troops continue to provide security at key installations such as the airports and seaports at Mogadishu and Kismayo and the airport at Baidoa; escort relief convoys to selected destinations in the interior on a regular basis; provide protection for premises used by United Nations agencies and NGOs; and maintain adequate capabilities for emergency response and evacuation by helicopter. The critical nature of the security role being played by UNOSOM II troops, particularly outside Mogadishu, was emphasized by the representatives of humanitarian organizations, who feared that a sudden reduction in troops could lead to the withdrawal of United Nations agencies and NGOs in anticipation, or as a result, of heightened insecurity.

15. The Special Mission recommends that any further reductions beyond that described on paragraph 12 above should be carefully decided and take into account evolving circumstances. My Special Representative and the Force Commander stressed that a troop level of approximately 15,000 represents the critical minimum below which the mandated tasks of UNOSOM II could not be achieved. The Special Mission is of the view that the Force should not be subjected to any hasty and large-scale reduction, which could destabilize security conditions in Somalia. In this connection, it argues that a clear distinction should be made between a planned, phased reduction and a sudden, substantial cut in the troop strength. The plan prepared by the Force Commander for the gradual reduction of the forces culminating in the scheduled completion of the mission by March 1995 indicates that the level of 15,000 could be achieved by the end of October or during November 1994.

16. However, if substantial progress is achieved in the political process of national reconciliation, resulting in a markedly improved security environment, accelerated reductions in the troop level could be considered. An important consideration would remain that such reductions not affect the security of substantive and support personnel, both civilian and military, and troop levels should be adequate for the tasks entrusted to UNOSOM II. Should the Council

decide to extend the mandate of UNOSOM II beyond March 1995, the phases in the planned reduction of troop levels would be adjusted accordingly.

IV. OBSERVATIONS

17. The humanitarian and national reconciliation efforts of the United Nations in Somalia are being undertaken in conditions of exceptional complexity. Despite considerable difficulties, the United Nations response has had a significant effect in addressing emergency relief and humanitarian assistance requirements, which were the original and primary priorities for the involvement of the international community in Somalia. Unfortunately, progress in national reconciliation and in bringing about security and stability, particularly in Mogadishu, has not kept pace with the achievements in the humanitarian area. The inordinate delay in implementation of agreements that the Somali factions have negotiated and endorsed, particularly in Addis Ababa and Nairobi, has continued to raise grave misgivings about the seriousness of their commitment to peace and national reconciliation.

18. The response of the international community ought to have shifted long ago from emergency relief to rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes. However, such efforts have been hampered by the slow progress in achieving political reconciliation and by a progressive deterioration of the security situation. The prospects for post-emergency recovery and rehabilitation also appear limited as a result of the lack of donor interest in the absence of tangible progress towards a political solution.

19. It is, however, too early to conclude that UNOSOM II cannot achieve the objectives for which it was established, although the omens do not appear promising. UNOSOM II continues to provide essential support and assistance to the humanitarian effort as well as to the police, judicial and penal programmes in Somalia. The Force also secures key ports, airports and installations and provides protection for United Nations and NGO personnel, as well as their material assets.

20. If, as a result of a rapprochement between the Hawiye sub-clans, national reconciliation can be achieved and an interim government established by the end of 1994, there would be just enough time to complete UNOSOM II's mandate by 31 March 1995. In such welcome circumstances, there might even be a case for extending the Mission, including the Force, for some months, though not necessarily at its present strength.

21. If, on the other hand, no significant progress has been made by the end of September 1994, particularly with respect to the Hawiye conference, the Security Council will have to decide how much longer it wishes to maintain a 15,000-strong Force just to provide some degree of protection to humanitarian operations and to United Nations and other international personnel. There would also be a need to take account of the readiness of troop-contributing countries to maintain their contingents in those circumstances.

22. It is apparent that the end of September 1994 will be a crucial period for both the national reconciliation process and the continued involvement of the

United Nations in Somalia. In addition to the prospects of Hawiye reconciliation, the ongoing contest for the leadership of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), the dominant faction in the north-east region, is expected to be resolved. There should also be a clearer indication about the extent to which the recently concluded Lower Juba and Absame conferences are facilitating national reconciliation and the degree to which the political alliances made during those conferences will endure. In addition, the outcome of the various attempts that have been made to bring the Somali National Movement (SNM) of the north-west into the reconciliation process will also be known.

23. However, there are also disturbing developments which seem to militate against national reconciliation. The two antagonistic groups, the Somali National Alliance (SNA) and the Somali Salvation Alliance (SSA), are continuing to encourage and facilitate the creation of new partisan factions, which are not parties to the agreements reached in Addis Ababa and Nairobi. This multiplication of factions will complicate further the prospects for the preparatory meeting and the subsequent national reconciliation conference and must be overcome without further delay.

24. It was thought at one time that the other segments of society, particularly the elders, could play a central role in the formation of a Somali Government. Given the fact that the factions were not effectively disarmed by the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) or by UNOSOM II, it has proved extremely difficult to marginalize them and they now often operate with the blessing of the elders. Despite these difficulties, it would seem that the prudent approach would be the one that is under way, i.e., the reconciliation of factions in the framework of the traditional structures, including in particular the initiative undertaken by the Imam of Hirab to reconcile the Hawiye.

25. Certain members of the Security Council, as well as many troop contributing countries, have conveyed to me in clear terms that they are not prepared to continue indefinitely their costly commitments, particularly when there are no encouraging signs of the Somali leader's readiness to assume responsibility for the proper governance of their own country on the basis of a durable national reconciliation. Similar views have been expressed by Member States with regard to the civilian police (CIVIPOL) programme. Some of them have informed me of their intention to withdraw their personnel from that programme. It is my hope that the Somali leaders concerned will realize that the nature and duration of international support to Somalia depend very much on their own resolve to achieve political compromise. The Security Council may wish to address a direct message to the principal Somali leaders to remind them that the future of their country lies in their hands.

26. In the light of the foregoing and after a careful review of the reports submitted to me by my Special Representative and the Special Mission, I have come to the conclusion that the United Nations should continue for a little longer to give the Somali leaders the opportunity to demonstrate that they are ready to cooperate with the United Nations and with each other in order to bring their country back from the abyss. I accordingly recommend that:

(a) UNOSOM II should make every effort to facilitate the convening of a Hawiye conference by the end of September 1994;

(b) The Force Commander should take immediate steps to reduce the Force level by 1,500, as recommended by the Special Mission, and thereafter bring it down to 15,000 all ranks as soon as possible;

(c) In the light of the progress made towards national reconciliation up to the end of September 1994, I should report to the Security Council, by 15 October 1994 at the latest, on the future of UNOSOM II;

(d) The Security Council consider approving, now or later, a one-month extension of the UNOSOM II mandate until 31 October 1994, to allow time for study of, and action on, the report I will submit to it by 15 October;

(e) In the interim, contingency plans for the full range of options referred to in subparagraph (c) above should be elaborated and refined.